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## POETRY.

From the Phil. Ch. Observer.

THY DAY, SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE."

When adverse winds and waves arise,  
And in my heart despondence sighs—  
When life her throng of cares reveals,  
And weakness o'er my spirit steals—  
Grateful I hear the kind decree,  
That, "as my day, my strength shall be."

When, with sad footstep, memory roves,  
Mid smitten joys, and buried loves—  
When sleep my tearful pillow flies,  
And dewy morning drinks my sighs—  
Still to thy promise, Lord, I flee,  
That, "as my day, my strength shall be."

One trial more must yet be past,  
One pang—the keenest, and the last—  
And when, with brow convulsed and pale,  
My feeble, quivering heart-strings fail,  
Redeemer, grant my soul to see,  
That, "as the day, her strength shall be." L. H. S.

From Hunt's Merchants' Magazine for Nov. 1840.

THE AMERICAN WHALE FISHERY.

The origin of the whale fishery we may trace to a foreign country. The Swedegians, it seems, were accustomed in an early period to take the whale in a regular manner, but without any system; and the Biscayans appear to have first adopted it as a settled pursuit, and carried it on with great vigor and success, from the twelfth to the fourteenth century.

It would also seem that the voyages of the Dutch as well as the English, to the Northern Ocean, for the purpose of discovering a passage to India, disclosed the existence of the whale, which swarmed in the seas, and measures were soon adopted both by the Dutch and English, for the purpose of its capture. It is a singular fact that during the middle of the seventeenth century, houses were fixed upon the northern shore of Spitzbergen, and provided with tanks, boilers, and all other necessary apparatus for the purpose of boiling the blubber, and preparing the oil for market. The Dutch whale fishery was in its most prosperous state during the year 1680, when it employed about 260 ships and 14,000 sailors. The English whale fishery was carried on by an exclusive company, like that of Holland; and in 1725 the South Sea Company embarked to a large extent in the trade, and prosecuted it with vigor for about eight years, when they relinquished the enterprise, having suffered considerable loss. So also the French and other nations formerly embarked in the same trade, with considerable success.

As far back as 1667, we have in the second volume of the Philosophical Transactions, a letter from Mr Richard Norwood, who resided at the Bermudas, which states that the whale fishery had been carried on in the bays of those islands for two or three years. A year or two afterwards, the whale fishery was proposed by a Mr Richard Stafford, who remarks that he had killed several black whales himself. "I have been," says he, "in the Bahama Islands, and there have seen of this same sort of whale (the sperm whale) dead on the shore, with sperm over their bodies! Myself and about twenty others have agreed to try whether we can master and kill them, for I never had heard of any of that sort that was killed by man, such is their fierceness and fierceness." "One such whale," said he, "would be worth many hundred pounds." He called New Providence, among the Bahamas, soon afterwards became distinguished as a whale fishing station. Before these colonies had proposed any of the sort, however, we find that the Indians upon the shores of North America were accustomed to venture out on the coast in their canoes, and pierce

them with their lances, or other instruments of the same kind, which were fastened to blocks of wood by strings.—These blocks were thrown overboard the moment that the instruments penetrated the body, and the attacks thus made appear to have been renewed the moment the whale showed himself on the surface, so that these monsters were finally worried to death. The attacks thus made by these imperfect instruments seem, however, to have been generally directed upon the young ones near the shores, that were towed to the coast, and the fat taken off from only one side, as they possessed no knowledge which would enable them to turn over the animal. It is obvious that the larger sort of whales must have effectually resisted the attacks of the savages with such rude weapons, and the demand for the oil, which, upon the northern part of the continent, they were accustomed to use as food, was but limited. These casual attacks of the whales that frequently strayed near the coast, cannot, we think, be considered even the foundation of the whale fishery as a regular system of traffic, the animals having been procured for a far different purpose than that of commerce. Without going into a particular account of these foreign fisheries, we enter at once into a consideration of the rise and progress of the whale fishery in our own country.

The hardy enterprise of New England is entitled to the credit of carrying out the whale fishery to the largest extent, and with the most brilliant success. The occupants of this region of the country, cast along the sea-shore, and upon a soil barren, rocky, and inviting in a very small degree the labors of agriculture, at an early period directed their adventurous enterprises to the sea. Yet their extraordinary vigor and daring, aided by the elasticity of their climate, their comparative poverty and their simple virtues, more than counterbalanced the consequences which would otherwise have resulted from the barrenness of their soil. The population bordering the shores of the sea turned their attention to its abundant resources, and their farms were on the ocean. Nor did the remarkable traits of hardihood and perseverance which they exhibited in this branch of commerce, running down to the period of the revolution, escape the notice of distinguished statesmen abroad. Their enterprise in this respect, it is well known, received a just and splendid eulogium from Edmund Burke, on the floor of the British Parliament, in his speech delivered in 1774, upon American affairs. "As to the wealth," said he, "which the colonists have drawn from the sea by their fisheries, you had all that matter fully opened at your bar. You surely thought these acquisitions of value, for they seemed to excite your envy; and yet the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised, ought rather, in my opinion, to have raised esteem and admiration. And pray, sir, what in the world is equal to it? Pass by the other parts, and look at the manner in which the New England people carry on the whale fishery. While we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis' Straits; while we are looking for them beneath the arctic circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen serpent of the south. Falkland Island, which seemed too re-

mote and too romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and resting-place for their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We learn that while some of them draw the line or strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude, and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries; no climate that is not witness to their toil. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pursued by this recent people—a people who are still in the gristle, and not yet hardened into manhood."

This traffic was commenced in Nantucket, an island in Massachusetts which looks out upon the Atlantic, and receives upon its shores the whole sweep of the ocean. Colonized, as it first was, by an adventurous and hardy race of settlers from other parts of Massachusetts, the colonists had ample means and motives to push their enterprises upon the waters of its neighboring coasts. We have a traditional account of the first expedition which was set on foot from this island for the capture of the whale. It appears that one of the species called "seragg" was described in the harbor of the infant colony, where it remained spouting and gambolling around the shore for three days. Measures were soon adopted by the settlers who were the original purchasers of the island for its capture. A harpoon, rude in its form, was invented and wrought; and after a severe contest, the monster was taken. The success of this adventure induced the people of that place to commence the enterprise of taking whales as a regular business, these animals being at that time very numerous around the coast; and, as early as 1672, we find the inhabitants entering into a formal contract with James Lopar, in which he engages to carry on the "whale catching" jointly with the town, for two years, on their giving to him ten acres of land in some convenient place, with commonage for two cows and twenty sheep and one horse, together with the necessary wood and water. The town were by this contract bound to carry on two thirds of the business, and himself the other third. This company was to have the monopoly of the trade, and no other company was permitted to engage in the traffic unless they should tender to this first organized body a portion of its shares. It was also provided that "whosoever kill any whale of the company or company's aforesaid, they are to pay to the town for every such whale five shillings." John Savage, a hardy New England man, was also procured to settle upon the island in the capacity of a cooper, upon nearly the same terms which had been made by the proprietors of the town with Lopar. We may suppose that the profits of this crude frame of enterprise were small, but they were at least sufficient to induce the prosecution of this species of traffic.

Meanwhile the people of Cape Cod had reached considerable proficiency in this branch of enterprise, and their success induced the fishermen of Nantucket to adopt more vigorous and systematic measures for its prosecution. Accordingly we find the inhabitants employing Ichabod Paddock as early as 1690, to instruct them respecting the best manner of taking the

whale and extracting the oil. The whaling expeditions from that port were then carried on in boats from the shore, and the white colonists derived important aid from the Indians, who manifested extraordinary aptness for the fishery of all kinds, and being placed in responsible stations as boat-steerers and headsmen, they soon became experienced and valuable whalers. These boats, in search of their game, often ventured even out of sight of the land during the pleasant days of winter, and performed feats which are scarcely exceeded in our own day. After the whale had been killed, he was towed ashore, and an instrument termed a 'crab,' and which was similar to a capstan, was used to "heave off" the blubber as fast as it was cut. This blubber was then placed upon carts, and conveyed to "try-houses" situated near their dwellings, where the oil was boiled out and prepared for market. For the purpose of enabling the fishermen to desery whales at a distance, a high spar was erected upon the shore, with cleats affixed to the top, where the whaler with his spy-glass could be securely lodged, and command a broad view of the ocean. No sensible diminution of the whales upon the coast appears to have existed from the first thirty years of the fishery, although eighty-six were taken near the shore during the year 1726, and eleven were sometimes towed to the land in one day.

We are informed that the first sperm whale known to the inhabitants, was found dead and ashore upon the southwestern part of the island; and here arose several conflicting claims to the right of property in this dead monster, the Indians claiming it by right of finding; the whites on the ground of their ownership of the island; and the officer of the crown seizing it by virtue of the well-known principle of the laws of England, giving to the king certain property which is discovered to have no visible owner, and in discussing which, Mr Justice Blackstone, if we remember right, specially designates a stranded whale. The matter was, however, at length adjusted, and the white men who first found it were permitted to hold the property, the whale having been previously divested of his teeth.

To Christopher Hussey, a Nantucket whaler, belongs the honor of capturing the first sperm whale, and his feat was performed during the year 1712, so far as it can be ascertained. This man, while cruising near the shore for "right whales," the species which had been the principal kind captured by the Nantucket whalers, was blown off from the shore, and falling in with a school of that species, he succeeded in capturing one, and towing him into port. This event gave a new impulse to the whale fishery upon the ocean, for vessels of thirty tons were soon built for the purpose of extending this traffic. These vessels were fitted out for cruises of about six weeks, and carried a few hogsheads, capable of containing the blubber of only one whale, which, after they had captured, they returned home, when the owners took the blubber and prepared the oil for market, despatching the ship upon another voyage. The boiling was done in try-houses, which were erected near the landing, and the outfits and apparatus were placed in warehouses situated near the same place. The substitution of vessels for boats constituted a new epoch in the expeditions of these Nantucket whalers, as the whales were expected to be diminished; and in 1715, the number of ves-